

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 and 18-39 are rejected; and claim 17 is objected to as being allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claims 1, 5, 6, 10, 12-14, 16, 18, 20, 21, 23-28 and 30-39 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,194,099 to Gernov et al in view of EP 858,119 to Nishimura et al.

Claims 2, 7-9, 11 and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gernov et al in view of Nishimura et al, further in view of U.S. 2006/0035149 to Nanba et al.

Claims 4 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gernov et al in view of Nishimura et al, further in view of US 2003/0049443 to Nishimura et al.

Claim 3 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gernov et al in view of Nishimura et al, further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,541,022 to Mizumoto et al.

Claim 19 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gernov et al in view of Nishimura et al, further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,085,015 to Armand et al.

In response, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate therein the recitation of claims 10, 14 and 17, to thereby obviate the foregoing rejections. Claims 11, 13, 15 and 16 have been amended to depend from claim 1. Claims 10, 12, 14, 17-29 and 36-39 have been canceled. Applicants reserve the right to file a continuation application directed to the canceled subject matter.

Withdrawal of all rejections and allowance of claims 1-9, 11, 13, 15, 16 and 30-35 is earnestly solicited.

In the event that the Examiner believes that it may be helpful to advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the local Washington, D.C. telephone number indicated below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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